



# *The River*

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER |  
JULY 2020

## Greetings and Salutations:

I come to you in the Name and Spirit of Jesus and pray that you have continued to remain steadfast in your journey with Christ.

The chaos of the past several months continues with no real end in sight. As I am writing you this month, we have pushed back our In-person Inside Worship from July 5 into August. We have seen a statewide health mandate that is requiring everyone to wear a mask while in public. And at the same time, we have no clear insight as to where the school system will be and what that will look like.

This has led to many different ranges of emotions as to where the church stands and what is our purpose. First, we have never stopped our worship, be it at first for a while it was all done online. We have then moved to Drive-In worship.

As it stands, we will continue with Drive-In worship until we see more decline in COVID cases and the Governor, Bishop, and CDC revise gathering standards and recommendations.

I understand that in the light large numbers gathering in protests around the country and the fact that many have continued to work everyday and find it rather frustrating that churches are still restricted. We set the date of July 5 with high hopes, but discussions had already begun with church leadership about pushing the date back a couple of weeks. Part of the discussion was that April (Admin Council Chair) who works in a doctor's office saw more cases of COVID in the area; this combined with Jeff & Susan's positive case contact between an employee and a family member led them to close the hardware store so that everyone could get tested. COVID entered our Church Community. This combined with the need for additional cleaning and sanitization added the need for both more volunteers for inside worship and cost for cleaning and supplies.

I want to pause and make a comparison that may help relate and clarify. If this was a major weather event such as a hurricane or snowstorm, I don't feel anyone would be upset about cancelling church for a week or two. Why? Because they would know that we were doing it for the best interest and safety of everyone. We have an obligation to make church as safe as possible for everyone. This comes as both a responsibility and a personal burden. So with COVID as I look across the makeup of South River's membership – I see several people who are classified as being in the High Risk class (with health concerns) and those who are care takers to High Risk people. I personally would hate it if anyone got sick from attending worship. With that we are using

due caution when we look at reopening inside worship.

So I feel and hear your frustration. But do you define Church as a place where you go or who you are. We are called to bear the message of Jesus out into the world. We do this through both words and deeds. We are called to see God working in the midst of all circumstances. We should be aware of how we respond to events and ask ourselves if what we do reflects God's grace.

The truth of the matter is that Satan is working hard to take our focus away from God by any means possible. Our response is to keep our focus on God and what we are call to do and be. We must be steadfast and don't give Satan any room to drive a wedge in our life.

Peace and Blessings

AJ